

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. MIKE POMPEO

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. POMPEO. Mr. Speaker, on May 5th, I missed Rollcall vote numbered 295 because I was unavoidably detained in an Energy and Commerce hearing.

Rollcall No. 295 was a vote on the Holt Amendment to H.R. 1230, Restarting American Offshore Leasing Now Act. Had I been present I would have voted "no."

HONORING THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN ON "REPUBLIC DAY"

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the Republic of Azerbaijan in celebration of the 93rd anniversary of Republic Day on May 28th. Later this year, Azerbaijan will also celebrate the 20th anniversary of its freedom from the Soviet Union and the start of diplomatic relations with the United States.

Located in a geopolitically dynamic region between Europe and Asia and sandwiched between Russia and Iran, Azerbaijan is a secular country with a predominantly Muslim population that has also been home for more than a millennia for vibrant Christian and Jewish communities.

Azerbaijan has opened Caspian energy resources to development by U.S. companies and has emerged as a key player for global energy security. The Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline project is the most successful project contributing to the development of the South Caucasus region and has become the main artery delivering Caspian Sea hydrocarbons to the U.S. and our partners in Europe. Notably, in 2009 Azerbaijan provided nearly one quarter of all crude oil supplies to Israel and is considered a leading potential natural gas provider for the U.S. supported Nabucco pipeline.

On the security front, immediately after 9/11 Azerbaijan was among the first to offer strong support and assistance to the United States. Azerbaijan participated in operations in Kosovo and Iraq and is actively engaged in Afghanistan, having recently doubled its military presence there. Azerbaijan has extended important over-flight clearances for U.S. and NATO flights to support ISAF and has regularly provided landing and refueling operations at its airports for U.S. and NATO forces. Also, Azerbaijan, as highlighted by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, plays an important role in the Northern Distribution Network, a supply route to Afghanistan by making available its ground and Caspian naval transportation facilities. Moreover, Azerbaijan provides vital support for U.S. nonproliferation efforts.

Again, as the Co-Chairman of the Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, it is my distinct pleasure to honor the Republic of Azerbaijan in celebration of the 93rd anniversary of Republic Day and to recognize the valuable bilateral relationship between the United States and Azerbaijan. I also encourage my col-

leagues who are interested in supporting Azerbaijan to join me as a member of Congressional Azerbaijan Caucus, a bipartisan group of nearly 40 Members of Congress working to help foster the growing partnership between the United States and Azerbaijan and to advance U.S. interests in this pivotal region.

HONORING ASTON PARK HEALTH CARE CENTER OF ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

HON. HEATH SHULER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mr. SHULER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Aston Park Health Care Center of Asheville, North Carolina during this year's National Nursing Home Week.

For over 30 years, Aston Park Health Care Center has treated residents and their families with respect, support, and friendship. They recognize that these values, along with high quality medical care, ensure the dignity of life for their residents. The Aston Park Health Care Center has earned a five star rating from the U.S. News & World Nursing Home Rankings for their holistic approach to Alzheimer's care, adult home care, assisted living, skilled nursing care, and short-term rehabilitation. That is how they do their part to carry out this year's National Nursing Home Week theme, "Fulfilling the Promise."

I would like to commend and thank all of the skilled and trained staff members at Aston Park Health Care Center who strive to ensure a proud life for Aston Park residents. Their warm, friendly, sincere, and comfortable atmosphere allows their residents to continue to live life to the fullest.

Mr. Speaker, in recognition of their excellence in care, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the staff and residents of Aston Park Health Care Center.

RECOGNIZING YOM HA'ATZMA'UT, ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the people of Israel on their Independence Day. On this very special day, we recognize and celebrate 63 years of Israel's independence as the national homeland of the Jewish people. This is a time to commemorate the rich history and journey from a scattered and persecuted Diaspora to the thriving modern nation we see today in the state of Israel.

Throughout their challenging history and against all odds, Israel has become a prospering democracy whose groundbreaking contributions in technology, medicine, agriculture, and environmental innovation have truly been a beacon to the world.

Since 1948, when the United States became the first country to recognize the Jewish State of Israel, we have always stood by her side as a strong ally and friend. As each day brings a new set of complex changes to the

Middle East, it is more vital than ever that we protect and strengthen that friendship. I am deeply committed to ensuring that Washington's steadfast support of Israel will continue to grow over the years, and I am honored to serve as a Member of Congress so I can bring my unwavering support for Israel to work every day.

This Congress must continue to show Israel the love and support that we have provided for more than six decades. There is much to rejoice on this momentous anniversary. Mazel tov, and may you continue to go from strength to strength.

IN CELEBRATION OF ISRAELI INDEPENDENCE DAY

HON. CAROLYN MCCARTHY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in honor of Israel's Independence Day. For 63 years and counting, Israel continues to be a valuable ally and friend. From fighting global terrorism, to containing the threat of Islamic radicalism, to impressive scientific research, Israel and the United States have developed a unique bond that is based upon shared visions, democratic values, and foreign policy goals.

Still, significant challenges remain for our close ally. Citizen uprisings in nations such as Egypt, Libya, and Syria have changed the political landscape of that region. While there is potential for positive political change, as citizens speak out and demand their rights, there is also increased uncertainty that threatens the stability of the already volatile region.

Mr. Speaker, as we celebrate Israel's independence this year, let's give them a gift they surely deserve—the full-faith assurance that this Congress will continue to robustly aid and assist its most trusted ally in the region.

I wish President Peres, Prime Minister Netanyahu, and the people of Israel all the best on this very important occasion.

NO TAXPAYER FUNDING FOR ABORTION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2011

Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 3, the "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act."

The title of this bill is misleading. This is not about funding abortions; it's about restricting a woman's right to choose. This bill is not necessary—the Hyde Amendment already prohibits federal funds from being used for abortion. This bill also raises taxes and penalizes individuals and small businesses that choose health plans that include abortion care.

The majority is using this bill as a tool to push the abortion debate into the tax code. H.R. 3 would increase taxes in order to prevent women from obtaining abortion care. Under the confines of the bill, rape victims could be subject to invasive IRS audits to